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ARISTOTLE'S POETICS AND CERTAIN AMERICAN LITERARY CRITICS

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IV

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN AND ARISTOTLE'S POETICS

Edmund Clarence Stedman was not only a less prolific writer than either Poe or Lowell, but was also in himself a far less important critic than either of the other two. It is what he represents, rather than what he is, that makes him worthy of study. Mr. DeMille writes thus of Stedman¹³⁴:

... He sums up, in himself, and in his four volumes, a whole stream of tendencies in American literature. He is to be considered, not as a great critic, but as an interesting and indicative symptom.

One must not think, however, that Stedman is in himself a negligible critic; his judgments of his contemporaries, when he chose to express them concisely, were in most cases correct. But he chose to follow taste, rather than to create it, as Poe and Lowell sought to create it. He had therefore to act more as a recorder of current opinion than as a molder of it. It is perhaps significant that his critical work has often more the air of history than of essay, and that much of his time was spent in making anthologies.

Stedman's age, of which he was mouthpiece, was the age of art for art's sake, as exemplified in England by the works of Gosse and Dobson, in America by those of Aldrich and Bayard Taylor. An age which was so enthralled by beauty of finish would find Aristotle's Poetics strong meat. Stedman, as might be expected, was far more impressed by the *Ars Poetica* of Horace¹³⁵ than by the Poetics of Aristotle. Stedman, however, did not utterly give in to the predilections of his contemporaries; he knew the Poetics well, and employed to good purpose some of its principles. It should be added that he was an excellent student of Greek and an ardent lover of the Classics. He made extensive studies in Theocritus, even to the extent of building up a critical text, preparatory to a translation of the idylls (this task, however, he never completed¹³⁶).

Stedman's final critical volume, *The Nature and Elements of Poetry*, naturally contains more specific

¹³⁴George E. DeMille, *Literary Criticism in America*, 136 (New York, Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press, 1931).

¹³⁵Stedman's references to Horace and citations from him outnumber many times those that have to do with Aristotle.

¹³⁶The critical works of Stedman comprise the following volumes: *Victorian Poets* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1875); *Poets of America* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1885); *The Nature and Elements of Poetry* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1892); *Genius, and Other Essays* (New York, Moffat, Yard, and Company, 1911); and the *Life and Letters of E. C. Stedman*, Edited by Laura Stedman and G. M. Gould (New York, Moffat, Yard, and Company, 1910. Two volumes). Stedman's first critical study was an essay, *Tennyson and Theocritus*, published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1871. This was subsequently printed as a chapter of his *Victorian Poets*. References to his work on Theocritus occur rather frequently in his letters.

references to Aristotle than his other, earlier, works contain. It is in part an attempt to outline a theory of poetry, and, since it contains a sketch of various theories of poetry, it must be concerned with Aristotle. There is in the earlier works also ample evidence that, even when he was composing them, he was aware of the teachings of the Poetics.

Stedman follows Aristotle in calling the poet a maker¹³⁷, but, since he was not greatly busied with the drama, he does not add Aristotle's later statement that the poet is primarily a maker of plots¹³⁸. He accepts Aristotle's doctrine of artistic imitation, to which reference has been made. Poetry is to Stedman an idealization of things¹³⁹: "While other arts must change and change, the pure office of the poet is ever to idealize and prophesy of the unknown..." In a later work¹⁴⁰, he expands this idea in a statement strongly reminiscent of the Poetics:

... The poet is not a realist merely as concerns the things that are seen. He draws these as they are, but as they are or may be at their best... His most audacious imaginings are within the felt possibilities of nature. But the use of poetry is to make us believe also in the impossible... There is nothing more lifeless, because nothing is more devoid of feeling and suggested movement, than servilely accurate imitation of nature...

Stedman believes with Aristotle that the objects of artistic imitation are men doing things; in fact, his terminology is Aristotle's, as the following passage shows¹⁴¹:

... Individuals, men and women, various and real, must be set before us in being and action—above all, in that mutual play upon one another's destinies which results from what we term the dramatic purport of life. Thus rising above mere introspection and analysis, poetry must be not so much a criticism as the objective portrayal and illumination of life itself.

So, too, he remarks of Emerson¹⁴², "... He is not the minstrel for those who would study men in action and suffering..." The imaginative power required to produce an artistic imitation of men in action and in suffering is for Stedman the sovereign of the arts¹⁴³. Creative imagination is the prime need of the poet¹⁴⁴, and, conversely, the imaginative work of the true poet is always creative¹⁴⁵, because the highest art aims at creative beauty¹⁴⁶. These sentiments, from whatever sources Stedman drew them, are in their origin Aristotelian.

Stedman believes, as Aristotle believed, that the in-

¹³⁷Victorian Poets, 298. In Poetics 1.10-11 there is a discussion centering on the proper use of the term *μοιχητής* in connection with writers.

¹³⁸Poetics 6.13-14, 6.18, 9.9.

¹³⁹Nature and Elements of Poetry, 197-198. Compare 152-153.

¹⁴⁰Nature and Elements of Poetry, 5; Life and Letters, 1.527; Poets of America, xii.

¹⁴¹Poets of America, 178. See note 13, above.

¹⁴²Nature and Elements of Poetry, 5.

¹⁴³Nature and Elements of Poetry, 104; Victorian Poets, 242.

¹⁴⁴Nature and Elements of Poetry, 44-45.

¹⁴⁵Poets of America, 105.

ventive power of the poet must be curbed within the bounds of the natural and the probable¹⁴⁷:

... It is imagination that makes study of external things and conceives of novel and more perfect and exciting uses and combinations that may be made of them—without transcending the limits of nature....

Again, he says¹⁴⁸:

... He <the poet> cannot invent forms and methods and symbols out of keeping with what we term the nature of things; such inventions, if possible, would be monstrous, baleful, and not to be endured....

Although Stedman shared to some extent the craze for finish and decoration that was rampant in his day, he constantly insisted that construction is the principal element in art. Construction, he says, must be decorated, not decoration constructed; and he adds¹⁴⁹ that the rude, spontaneous lyric of a natural bard is far more genuinely poetic than the labored product of a rhymester "abundantly supplied with poetical material, with images, quaint words, conceits, and dainty rhymes and alliteration..." He recommends that poets study ancient Classics to learn configuration¹⁵⁰:

... With respect to configuration, the antique genius, in literature as in art, was clear and assured. It imagined plainly, and drew firm outlines....

One can see that Stedman, although he seldom has to deal with tragedy, follows the view of Aristotle that the construction, or plot, is of supreme importance. His repeated assurance that the general design is the first consideration in a work of art squares with Aristotle's recommendation that the poet shall outline his story before filling in the episodes¹⁵¹. In common with Aristotle he demands organic unity of a work of art¹⁵²:

... Tennyson, though composing an extended work, seeks the utmost terseness of expression; howsoever composite his verse, it is tightly packed and cemented, and decorated to repletion with fretwork and precious stones; nothing is neglected, nothing wasted, nothing misapplied. You cannot take out a word or sentence without marring the structure, nor can you find a blemish.

Under all the adornment which his age required, Stedman saw and praised primarily the unity, like that of a living body, which was so important in Aristotle's eyes. The following passage further clarifies Stedman's Aristotelian sentiments¹⁵³:

Shape, arrangement, proportion compose the synthetic beauty of construction.... Beauty of construction is still more potent in the effect of plot and arrangement....

This is practically Aristotle's statement that beauty lies in two characteristics of an object, size, and order¹⁵⁴.

Stedman, in his definition of poetry, leans heavily upon Aristotle¹⁵⁵:

I have mentioned Aristotle. He at least applied to the subject <the definition of poetry> a cool and level

intellect; and his formula, to which in certain essentials all must pay respect, is an ultimate deduction from the antique. It fails of his master Plato's spirituality, but excels in precision. Aristotle regards poetry as a structure whose office is imitation through imagery, and its end delight—the latter caused not by the imitation, but through workmanship, harmony, and rhythm. The historian shows what has happened, the poet such things as might have been, devoted to universal truth rather than to particulars. The poet—the *τοντης*—is, of course, a maker, and his task is invention. Finally, he must feel strongly what he writes. Here we have the classical view. The Greeks, looking upon poetry as a fine art, had no hesitation in giving it outline and law. Naturally an artist like Horace assented to this conception. Within his range there is no more enduring poet; yet he excludes himself from the title, and this because of the very elements which make him so modern—his lyrical grace and personal note. With Aristotle, he yielded the laurel solely to heroic dramatists and epic bards....

Stedman is deeply impressed also by Milton's description of poetry as "simple, sensuous, and passionate..."¹⁵⁶; he objects, however, to the custom of quoting Milton's definition out of its context, and himself cites the rest of Milton's words¹⁵⁷:

... I mean...that sublime art which in Aristotle's Poetics, in Horace...teaches what the laws are of a true epic poem, what of a dramatic, what of a lyric, what decorum is, which is the grand masterpiece to observe....

With these two passages in mind, one can without difficulty see that Stedman had Aristotle in mind when he coined the following definition of poetry¹⁵⁸:

... Poetry is rhythmical, imaginative language, expressing the invention, taste, thought, passion, and insight of the human soul.

Stedman quotes with approbation Aristotle's definition of tragedy¹⁵⁹:

Tragedy, according to Aristotle,... 'is an imitation of one entire, great, and probable action, not told but represented, which, by moving in us fear and pity, is conducive to the purging of those two passions in our minds'.

Since, however, the writers whom Stedman criticized were, with the possible exception of Browning, little given to the writing of tragedy, Stedman makes small use of the definition.

The subjects in which Stedman most markedly shows the effect of his reading of Aristotle have now been discussed. There remain, however, a number of minor points in which he shows Aristotelian influence upon his thinking. In remarking that expression is the avowed function of all the arts, he says¹⁶⁰, "...Out of the need for it <expression>, art in the rude and primitive forms has ever sprung..." Aristotle assigns as one of the natural causes of artistic imitation man's instinct for imitation¹⁶¹.

Stedman has comparatively little to say about the agents of a drama; what he does say, however, has an Aristotelian tinge. He knows that the poet deals with

¹⁴⁷Genius, in Genius and Other Essays, 29. See also Nature and Elements of Poetry, 136.

¹⁴⁸Nature and Elements of Poetry, 45.

¹⁴⁹Victorian Poets, 289.

¹⁵⁰Nature and Elements of Poetry, 242-243.

¹⁵¹See note 23, above.

¹⁵²Victorian Poets, 196. In Poetics, Chapter 7, Aristotle discusses organic unity.

¹⁵³Poetics 7.9 ... τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ... τάξει ἔστιν, "... for beauty depends upon these two qualities, size and order..."; "...

¹⁵⁴Beauty is a matter of size and order...".

¹⁵⁵Nature and Elements of Poetry, 17.

¹⁵⁶Nature and Elements of Poetry, 27, note 1.

¹⁵⁷The Prose Works of John Milton, Edited by J. A. St. John, 3.473-474 (London, Henry G. Bohn, 1848. Five volumes).

¹⁵⁸Nature and Elements of Poetry, 44.

¹⁵⁹Nature and Elements of Poetry, 103. Stedman here summarizes Poetics 6.1-2.

¹⁶⁰Nature and Elements of Poetry, 44.

¹⁶¹Poetics 4.1-2 'Εοικαστι... πάντας (see note 10, above).

universal truth, but expresses his ideas by means of living types. Of Emerson he says¹⁶², "... Emerson would be the 'best bard, because the wisest,' if the wisdom of his song illustrated itself in living types..." Stedman knows that Browning, as a result of his study of medieval themes, is able to show his readers the types of the lover, noble, statesman, thinker, and priest, as they existed in days past¹⁶³. Stedman requires that the characters of the poet shall be true to life and true to type, as Aristotle directs¹⁶⁴, but he says nothing of Aristotle's third demand, that they be self-consistent. He commends Swinburne's drama *Chastelard* because the characters are true to the types of Scottish citizens, courtiers, etc.¹⁶⁵; he insists that characters shall talk naturally, for rhetoric is a false note in poetry¹⁶⁶. He believes that truth to life, which is so essential, can be achieved by the poet only in the case of types with which he is familiar¹⁶⁷.

Stedman insists, with Aristotle, that the end of poetry is pleasure¹⁶⁸. Aristotle, indeed, does not rule out ethical content from poetry; nor does Stedman, though his disgust at the didacticism of American poets generally makes him appear to do so. He can praise Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and Longfellow's *Evangeline*, without a word of blame for their ethical content. In discussing Wordsworth and Coleridge¹⁶⁹, Stedman says, "... The poet has no restriction beyond the duty of giving pleasure..." Evidently, however, ethical teaching which is inherent in the story itself, and is deeply felt by the artist was not, to Stedman, taboo. Stedman's poem, *The Blameless Prince*, certainly contains ethical teaching. It is clearly the sincerity of the poet that here, as in all things, makes the difference between success and failure. Aristotle says¹⁷⁰:

So far as he is able, the poet should also assume the very attitudes and gestures appropriate to the emotions of the agents; for among authors with the same natural ability, they will be most convincing who themselves experience the feelings they represent....

Of Burns, Stedman says¹⁷¹:

... Robert Burns is first and always the poet of natural emotion, and his fame is a steadfast lesson to minstrels

¹⁶² Poets of America, 157. ¹⁶³ Victorian Poets, 30.

¹⁶⁴ Poetics 15.4-5. *Δεῖτερον . . . εἰργται*, "... They must be true to type. There is, for example, a type of manly valor and eloquence; but it would be inappropriate for the poet to represent a woman as valorous in this way, or as masterly in argument. (3) Thirdly, they must be true to life, which is something different from making them good or true to type, as these terms have just been defined..."; "... The second point is to make them appropriate. The Character before us may be, say, manly; but it is not appropriate in a female Character to be manly, or clever. The third is to make them like the reality, which is not the same as their being good and appropriate, in our sense of the term..." See *Nature and Elements of Poetry*, 195.

¹⁶⁵ Victorian Poets, 405.

¹⁶⁶ Nature and Elements of Poetry, 59.

¹⁶⁷ Nature and Elements of Poetry, 195. See also pages 104, 152-153, and Poets of America, xii.

¹⁶⁸ Poetics 6.1-3. Cooper, Aristotle on the Art of Poetry, 21 (see note 6, above), remarks: "... pleasure, to Aristotle, signifies, not a passive state of being, but a form of activity". See *Nature and Elements of Poetry*, 188; Victorian Poets, 171, 351; Poets of America, 215; *Life and Letters*, 2, 593: "The truth is . . . that my whole capricious nature is by instinct, and through faulty training, the reverse of didactical".

¹⁶⁹ Nature and Elements of Poetry, 20.

¹⁷⁰ Poetics 17.3 . . . *δοα . . . δληθινώτα* . . . , "... As far as may be, too, the poet should even act his story with the very gestures of his personages. Given the same natural qualifications, he who feels the emotions to be described will be the most convincing; distress and anger, for instance, are portrayed most truthfully by one who is feeling them at the moment..."

¹⁷¹ Nature and Elements of Poetry, 265.

that if they wish their fellow-men to feel for and with them, they must themselves have feeling....

That Stedman had some notion of Aristotle's distinction between the plastic and the enthusiastic types of poet¹⁷² appears when he says¹⁷³:

... Poetry is differentiated by the Me and the Not Me—by the poet's self-consciousness, or by the representation of life and thought apart from his own individuality.

Finally, Stedman echoes Aristotle's (and Horace's) belief in the superiority of the drama to all other types of poetry¹⁷⁴, and he gives substantially the same reason that they give, that drama includes the other types of poetry. Aristotle, to be sure, considers tragedy to be supreme; what he would have said of comedy we cannot know. Stedman says¹⁷⁵:

The highest form of poetry is the drama, for it includes *all other forms*, and should combine them in their greatest excellence.

Again, he says¹⁷⁶,

... I have often thought upon the relative stations of the various classes of poetry, and am disposed to deem eminence in the grand drama the supreme eminence; and this because, at its highest, the drama includes all other classes, whether considered technically or essentially.

When one considers how much of the Poetics deals with drama and epic, and how little Stedman was concerned with either of these types of poetry, it is remarkable to what an extent Stedman made use of the principles expressed in the Poetics.

WASHINGTON AND
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JOHN PAUL PRITCHARD

ON SPITTING INTO THE HAND AS A SUPERSTITIOUS ACT

At the present time spitting into the palm of the hand before making a great physical effort is, in general, a kind of psychological preparation, but Pliny the Elder¹ tells us that there were Romans who spat into their hands in order to increase the force of the blow. Pliny goes on to say that, if anyone repented of an injury inflicted in a hand-to-hand fight or by a missile he spat into the hand that had caused it, whereupon the victim forthwith condoned the offense.

The superstitious belief in the power of spittle to increase the force of a blow still survives, as may be seen from several quotations:

Spitting on the hands before striking a blow with the fist is believed to make the blow heavier².

The custom of spitting in the hand before striking still exists among pugilists³.

Among the endless magical and medical properties that were formerly supposed to be possessed by human saliva, one is almost universally credited by the Scottish

¹⁷² See note 127, above.

¹⁷³ Nature and Elements of Poetry, 77.

¹⁷⁴ Poetics 26 contains Aristotle's discussion of this problem.

¹⁷⁵ Poets of America, 426-429.

¹⁷⁶ Nature and Elements of Poetry, 105.

¹ *Naturalis Historia* 28.36-37.

² Fanny D. Bergen, *Animal and Plant Lore*, 16 (in *Memoirs of the American Folk-Lore Society*, Volume 7 [1899]). The Pliny parallel is cited on page 128 of this book.

³ W. E. H. Lecky, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*, 1, 371, note 1 (New York and London, Appleton, 1929). Lecky makes this comment in connection with the passage from Pliny.

schoolboy up to the present hour, for few of them ever assume the temporary character of pugilists without duly spitting into their hands ere they close their fists; as if they retained a full reliance on the magical power of the saliva to increase the strength of the impending blow, if not to avert any feeling of malice produced by it—as was enunciated eighteen centuries ago, by one *<Pliny the Elder>* of the most laborious and esteemed writers of that age⁴.

The last quotation occurs in a chapter devoted to examples of the survival of Roman influence in Scotland.

From these passages it seems clear that under certain circumstances spitting into the palm of the hand is a superstitious act, not merely an unpleasant habit.

In connection with Pliny's statement about the power of the aggressor to destroy the effect of his blow, it is worth while to quote from a volume on New England superstitions⁵:

In the old days when feruling was common in the schools, the boys had a belief that if they spit in their hand before the teacher struck it, the ferule would break in two at the first blow.

It is the purpose of this note not to lay claim to a new discovery but merely to bring together interesting material that is widely scattered⁶.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

EUGENE S. MCCARTNEY

SIMPLE CONDITIONS IN PAST TIME IN ENGLISH AND IN LATIN

During a rather wide editorial experience I have often been struck by the inability of the great majority of authors to handle in English simple conditions in past time. A common error is well illustrated by the following sentence: "If there were any attachment to a sacral rib, it must have been slight and loose". The author did not wish to preclude the possibility of the existence of such an attachment, as is shown by the apodosis, but the protasis implies that there was no such attachment.

In the third person of the singular number the verb in the protasis of a simple condition in past time was generally put by the authors I have in mind in the subjunctive form¹. Within a few months after I had started to collect examples from manuscripts which came under my supervision I had found six misuses as compared with one correct use. I believe that this proportion would hold for all manuscripts that come to me. Examples may be culled from papers on both literary and scientific subjects, and from the printed page² as well as from manuscripts.

Other illustrations of the error may prove interesting:

If a very thin ware were to be produced, the walls of the vessel were pared to the correct thickness with a knife after the drying had progressed sufficiently.

¹E. B. Simpson, *Folk Lore in Lowland Scotland*, 56 (London, J. M. Dent and Co., 1908).

²C. Johnson, *What They Say in New England*, 43 (Boston, Lee and Shepherd, 1807).

³Pertinent to this note is a paper by Frank W. Nicolson, entitled *The Saliva Superstition in Classical Antiquity*, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 8 (1897), 23-40.

⁴When the verb of the conditional clause is in the second person singular or in any person of the plural number it is not always possible to tell from the protasis alone what type of condition is represented.

⁵I have four examples from a recent popular novel.

If a topic were lively enough to occupy such attention, another meeting was held in the evening for the transaction of business.

All during the cold dark winter Wang Lung sat often beside O-lan's bed, and if she were cold he lit an earthen pot of charcoal and set it beside her bed for warmth, and she murmured each time gently.

These orders instructed the governors to cease all their preparations for the attack, or if it were already launched, to stop as soon as the notices arrived.

The use of the form "were" makes a sentence seem almost ludicrous when there are alternative conditions in past time, as in the following quotation from a book:

If it were cold, they burrowed in the blankets of the hut; if it were warm, they followed the shadow of the wickiup around.

If the study of the Classics really is an aid to the mastery of English, then teachers of Latin have a much better opportunity than teachers of English to correct the prevailing misuse of the subjunctive mood in simple conditions in past time, especially since so many imperfect and perfect subjunctives in indirect discourse have to be rendered in the indicative mood.

I am giving several examples of the Latin treatment of simple conditions in past time in direct discourse: ... hi, si quid *erat* durius, concurrebant... (Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 1.48.6); At tamen si quae res *erat* maior, idem ille populus horum auctoritate maxime commovebatur (Cicero, *Pro Sestio* 105); Si ad illum hereditas *veniebat*, veri simile est ab illo necatum (Cicero, *De Inventione* 1.89); ... si qui senes ac deforms *erant*, eos in hostium numero ducit... (Cicero, *In Verrem* 5.64).

Conditional clauses in past tenses in indirect discourse are far more instructive, since the student cannot translate them correctly until he understands of what type they are. An example may be found in Cicero, *In Verrem* 5.20: ... non dicam ne illud quidem, si maxime in culpa *fuerit* <this would be *fuit* in direct discourse> Apollonius, tamen in hominem maximae civitatis honestissimum tam graviter animadverti, causa indicta, non oportuisse.

The linguistic opportunist who wishes to drive home the point I am trying to make in this note might well use a sentence in Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 5.29.6, in which there are two verbs in the imperfect subjunctive in indirect discourse: <Titurius... clamitabat: see § 1> Suam sententiam in utramque partem esse tutam: si nihil *esset* durius, nihil cum periculo ad proximam legionem perventuros, si Gallia omnis cum Germanis *consentiret*, unam esse in celeritate positam salutem. The translation of either *si*-clause by the contrary-to-fact form would make nonsense of the passage. Titurius was anticipating future contingencies, not present impossibilities.

The amusing results that may arise from the incorrect use of the subjunctive mood in simple conditions in past time may be illustrated by the implications of the last example I quoted in English:

If it were cold <but it was not cold>, they burrowed in the blankets of the hut <and so became hotter when coolness was desired>; if it were warm <but it was not warm>, they followed the shadow of the wickiup

around <and so became colder when warmth was desired>.

I have asked authors who made mistakes in simple conditions in past time whether they had ever studied Latin. Most of them had done so. It seems to me that all serious students of Latin should through the study of Latin have a better understanding of conditional sentences in English.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

EUGENE S. McCARTNEY

REVIEWS

Hannibal. By G. P. Baker. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company (1929). Pp. xv + 332. \$3.50.

Ancient sources do not afford us full biographical detail concerning the life of Hannibal. It is not merely from choice, therefore, that Mr. Baker in his study of the great Carthaginian gives us much more than a biography¹. But it is partly from choice, for he recognizes that the importance of Hannibal in world history can be truly appreciated only if the background is well elaborated. On pages 316-317 he says,

... If we knew as much of Hannibal as we do of Napoleon, the Carthaginian might not suffer in the comparison. But no such detailed account of Hannibal is possible. He remains a brilliant sketch. What we lose here, however, is compensated for by the greater opportunity we have for seeing him "in the large." ... The interest of Hannibal consequently lies in his setting: the relation he bore to the world in which he lived...

To emphasize this relation adequately Mr. Baker first of all devotes two chapters to sketching the origin and early history of Carthage and to narrating the events of the First Punic War. The remaining eleven chapters develop in detail the career of Hannibal from his entry into Spain with his father Hamilcar in 237 B. C. to his suicide in Bithynia fifty-four years later. From this narrative the author wishes us to see not only the kind of man Hannibal was and the influence he had upon his times, as well as their influence upon him, but also the effect of Hannibal upon the course of Roman history, and, consequently, upon world history, for it is his contention (ix) that "Hannibal was thus one of the most important of the men who originated the tradition of personal government, as distinguished from collegial or senatorial...", and, since (ix) the "spiritual ancestor" of Caesar was Sulla, and the "spiritual ancestor" of Sulla was Scipio Africanus, and since Scipio was the admiring and understanding "wraith of Hannibal" (212), it seems to be a reasonable conclusion (ix) that "... Hannibal, therefore, was one of the remote fountains of the whole stream of Roman imperial monarchy, and all that came of it...". But this historical derivation, whose validity may be questioned,

is rather a corollary to the main problem, which is to emphasize the masterly rôle of Hannibal in the momentous drama of the Second Punic War.

Outstanding characteristics of Mr. Baker's work are his interest in human personality and his delight in dramatic presentation. These traits combined lead him regularly to call Hannibal "the Wizard"; while the great Scipio is always "Publius" (which is almost like calling Washington 'George', or Lee 'Robert'!). Hannibal was one of those strong silent men who by sheer genius control circumstances. The main-spring of his success was his use of psychology in dealing with others, whether in war or in politics: "... His power was based almost solely upon the direct personal influence he could, as a man, exert upon other men..." (viii-ix), both friends and foes. So the victory at Lake Trasimene was (98) "not a heroic epic, but a psychological drama". It was the adoption of the "psychological method", which was "Hannibal's method" (214), that set off Scipio as distinctly different from other Roman generals in the Hannibalic War and led to his ultimate success. Mr. Baker's interest in his protagonist does not lead him to neglect the other figures in his historical drama. They are all introduced with effective and vivid touches of characterization, and they are treated with candid reasonableness and fairness.

Mr. Baker has a distinctive style of writing which makes literature out of historical material and makes of his book from beginning to end anything but dull reading. He colors his narrative with a half-serious, half-whimsical attitude of detachment, and he constantly heightens it by dramatic devices, though always in good taste. For the dramatic, in fact, he has a noticeable *penchant*. Yet this is not to say that he gives free rein to his fancy. On the contrary, he displays a highly critical attitude throughout, being, if anything, rather conservative and sceptical of the tradition as transmitted. At times he refuses to debate specific, but relatively minor, issues, as, for example, the exact route by which Hannibal crossed the Alps. In a footnote (81-82) he briefly presents the case but makes no decision in the text. Hannibal's famous oath, taken at the age of nine, was "no doubt a party-oath...", and "we are certainly not called upon to regard it as an expression of personal hatred" (70, note 2). Hannibal knew better than to hope to conquer Rome itself. His invasion of Italy had "political objectives", his aim being "to disrupt and destroy the political union of Italy" (85-86; compare 144-145, with note 1 to page 144). The famous vinegar story of Livy 21.37 is relegated to mention in a foot-note (83), with the remark that "in any case <it> is not necessary to the narrative and may be omitted without loss" (83, note 1). In the text we read merely that "working all day, the army proceeded to cut a path..." Toward the uses of portents and auguries for political ends Mr. Baker has regularly a cynical attitude (as will be seen, for example, on pages 99, 158, 215, 245). The Delphic oracle, he remarks (158), "the keenest diplomatist in the civilized world ... was not often caught napping..."

¹The contents of the book are as follows: Preface (vii-xi); <Table of> Contents (xiii); <List of> Illustrations <and> Maps and Diagrams (xv); I, Prelude to Struggle (1-30); II, The Protagonists Enter the Arena (31-58); III, The Crossing of the Alps (59-86); IV, The Entry into Italy (87-104); V, Quintus Fabius and the Aristocratic Dictatorship (105-125); VI, Varro, and the Policy of the Populares (126-149); VII, The Morrow of Cannae (150-172); VIII, Syracuse (173-195); IX, The Vortex (196-221); X, The Crisis (222-247); XI, Publius Scipio and the Struggle in Africa (248-276); XII, Antiochus Megas: and the Struggle in Asia (277-306); XIII, Last News About Hannibal (307-328); Index (329-332).

Livy and Polybius have furnished Mr. Baker with most of his basic material. He shows evidence of having used his sources with careful discrimination. His footnotes are not numerous enough to be obtrusive, but they are usually well worth while. At one point Mr. Baker seems to have followed Livy too faithfully, without his customary caution. The one hundred hostages mentioned in Livy 30. 37.5 as the total number of hostages are not wholly reconcilable with the one hundred of 32.2.3, mentioned there as but a part of the total; Mr. Baker repeats Livy here without mentioning the discrepancy or attempting a reconciliation (274, 282).

The book has an index but no bibliography, though bibliographical references are furnished in the footnotes. The maps and plans could be better; they are rough sketches, not accurate in detail, and they do not include a map of Italy alone, which would be the most useful of all. The only illustration is a reproduction of three coins from the British Museum, two of them showing heads of Hannibal, one a head of Scipio Africanus.

The reader interested in the Punic Wars and in Hannibal will find in Mr. Baker's book a thoughtful, well composed, and exceptionally fascinating work.

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JOHN W. SPAETH, JR.

Julius Caesar. By John Buchan. New York: D. Appleton and Company (1932). Pp. xii + 158. \$2.00.

Mr. Buchan's volume, *Julius Caesar*¹, was one of the first of the series of Appleton Biographies to make its appearance. Its author, besides being a British barrister and a member of Parliament, is a writer of prodigious capacity, best known, perhaps, for his four-volume *History of the Great War* and for his many romantic tales. Since the appearance of his *Scholar-Gipsies* in 1896, upwards of forty books have come from his pen. The year 1932 alone, which produced his *Julius Caesar*, brought forth also his life of Sir Walter Scott and two works of fiction, *The Gap in the Curtain*, and *The Magic Walking-Stick*. This biography of Caesar seems to be his first venture as a writer into the field of ancient history.

The book is designed for the general reader, and the student of Caesar, therefore, will discover in it nothing very original. The author has followed faithfully in the footsteps of others; he cites the usual authorities, ancient and modern, and shows that he has a well-read knowledge of them. His reliance upon Professor Sihler's *Annals of Caesar*², which he characterizes as "a useful critical analysis of the evidence . . ." (152), is perceptible at many points. He is intelligently aware of the problems that arise in a study of Caesar's career,

¹The contents of the book are as follows: <Table of> Contents (vii); Introduction (ix-xii); I, The Republic in Decay (1-14); II, The Forerunners (15-24); III, The Youth of Caesar (25-32); IV, The Party Game (33-59); V, The First Consulship (60-67); VI, The Conquest of Gaul (68-86); VII, The Revolt of Gaul (87-99); VIII, The Rubicon (100-113); IX, The Conquest of the World (114-128); X, Facts and Visions (129-144); XI, The End (145-149); Bibliographical Note (150-154); Index (155-158).

²E. G. Sihler, *Annals of Caesar* (New York, G. E. Stechert and Company, 1911).

though some of these, quite necessarily, he does not attempt to discuss in his limited space. His special merits in this book are his unpretentious but fresh and alert style and his success in impressing upon the reader's attention the immortal humanity of Caesar, "no leaden superman, no heavy-handed egotist, but one with all the charms and graces . . ." (139), "a man of genius and not a demigod . . ." (141).

Mr. Buchan's appraisal of Caesar is frankly eulogistic. He sees in his subject (ix) a man who "performed the greatest constructive task ever achieved by human hands . . .", one who (138) "gave civilisation a life of five further centuries before the dark curtain descended . . .". Caesar's standards "were human, but the highest to which humanity can attain, and his work may well be regarded as the greatest recorded effort of the human genius" (139). This is very much in Mommsen's vein; yet, in contrast, the author has a high regard for Cicero, too (46), "one of the most versatile and gifted of Romans and the supreme master of the Latin tongue . . .", one who "was honourable, affectionate, and loyal, and . . . had that finest of courage which means the habitual suppression of temperamental fears . . .". But his foil to Caesar among Caesar's contemporaries is Cato of Utica, whom he can scarcely mention without a sneer (see e. g. 43-44, 127, 141). His bias reaches to unreasonable limits when he asserts (43) that Cato's "moral sense in many ways was no higher than that of others, as he showed in his mission to Cyprus . . .". Just what this means I am not sure. Cicero, *Pro Sestio* 60, gives a far different impression; if his testimony be regarded as *ex parte*, one can cite that of Sallust (*De Coniuratione Catilinae* 53-54), who was indebted to Caesar for political preferment. Even Mommsen can describe this "Don Quixote of the aristocracy", Cato, as "honourable and steadfast, earnest in purpose and in action, full of attachment to his country and to its hereditary constitution . . ."; and M. Cary (in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 9.527) writes even more to the point:

... In saddling Cato with this bailiff's errand <the mission to Cyprus in 58> Caesar and Clodius may have nourished a secret hope that he would bring home a damaged reputation. If so, they made a bad speculation, for Cato combined personal integrity with expert knowledge of accounting, and on his return not a flaw could be found in his receivership. . . .

This is not as Mr. Buchan would have us believe.

There are other cases of dogmatism or exaggeration that will bear sobering down. The Roman Equites are blamed far more than they deserve for the economic ills of Rome in the second century before Christ (9, 12, 13); they are even held "responsible for the fact that half the people were always in debt . . ." (9). It is questionable (despite Gellius 15.11 and Suetonius, *De Rhetoribus* 1) whether (26) "the Latin schools of rhetoric were closed when he <Caesar> was ten years old . . ."; at any rate, this was hardly the reason that "most of his training must have been on Greek lines" (*ibidem*). Journalistic rhetoric may account for such statements as that (4), in the second century before

³Theodor Mommsen, *The History of Rome*, Translated by W. P. Dickson (London, Macmillan, 1908), 4.454.

Christ, "... The <Roman> Assembly, the legal sovereign, had less actual power than a king in the most limited of monarchies...", or that (12), at the end of the same century, Rome "was rapidly becoming a city of marble...", or that (115-116), after Caesar's march on Rome in 49, "every road running south and east from Rome was thronged with fleeing politicians and all the classes whose consciences were bad and who had much to lose...". That "Caesar was probably the first man to number his legions..." (71, note 1) is true if one understands by this the giving of *permanent* numbers; an annual number system seems to have been in use before Caesar⁴.

The errors of fact which I have detected, and a few of which I cite here, seem not to be serious. Cicero was not, as Mr. Buchan asserts (53-54), "one of his <Clodius's> chief prosecutors..." in the trial of 61 B. C., but a very damaging witness. It was not the Assembly but the Senate which added Transalpine Gaul to Caesar's provincial assignment in 59 B. C. (62). The Senate at its meeting in January of 49 did not decree that "Caesar must give up his province before March 1..." (107), but that he must give it up *ante certam diem* (Caesar, *De Bello Civili* 1.2.6); some interpret this as meaning March 1, others as meaning July 1, but others as 'a certain date' to be fixed later. The Battle of Munda was fought in March of 45 (as correctly stated on page 128), not "in the intercalary period..." at the end of 46 (as is incorrectly implied on page 127). At the time of the battle Octavius was "a boy of eighteen..." (128), but later in the same year he has become "a pleasant modest youth of seventeen..." (142)!

These criticisms are made at some length to indicate to those who care for such knowledge wherein the weaknesses of Mr. Buchan's book consist. They are not very serious, to be sure, and certainly of little moment to the general reader, who will find in the book a readable, well-balanced sketch of a fascinating life.

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Justinian. By G. P. Baker. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company (1931). Pp. xvii + 340. \$3.50¹.

Mr. Baker's work on Justinian is the fifth volume in a series of biographical studies, of Sulla (1927), Tiberius (1928), Hannibal (1929), and Constantine (1930), and now the volume under review, all from his pen and all testifying to his keen interest in classical antiquity. In the Preface to this latest study (xii-xiii) he professes two aims, first, to recapture the in-

⁴Compare H. M. D. Parker, *The Roman Legions*, 45-46, 55-56. (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1928).

¹The contents of the book are as follows: Preface (v-xiii); <Table of> Contents (xv); <List of> Illustrations, Maps and Diagrams (xvii); I, Choosing Partners (1-26); II, The Plan of Campaign (27-52); III, The Forging of the Instrument: The Work of Belisarius (53-77); IV, Nika: The Revolt of the Blues and Greens (78-102); V, The Beginning of the Reconquest of the World State (103-129); VI, The Hoodwink of King Theodahad (130-156); VII, The Siege of Rome (157-182); VIII, The Fall of the Gothic Monarchy (183-207); IX, The Destruction of the Instrument: (I) The Work of Antonina (208-231); X, The Destruction of the Instrument: (II) The Work of Theodora (232-258); XI, Totila, and the Second Struggle with the Goths (259-284); XII, Dissolution of Partnership (285-309); XIII, Epilogue: The End of the Reign of Justinian (310-335); Index (337-349).

formation supplied about Justinian by Procopius, above all others, and to interpret and revalue it in the light of modern scholarship, and, secondly, to point out clearly the cardinal position which Justinian holds, in the full course of European history, "between the old, mature imperial system and the young immature system of national states which was beginning its career in western Europe..." (xiii). But, more than that, the handling of this historical material should be such as to emphasize "the overwhelming fact of personality..." (x). The understanding student of Justinian should "find him bulking larger as a man and a husband than as a legislator..." (v), and may well regard him and his much-talked-of consort Theodora as constituting "the first notable man-and-woman partnership in history..." (x).

Now it almost seems as if these statements of faith, whether before or after the accomplishment, pass muster in Mr. Baker's mind as a determinant of his scope and a justification for his omissions. A fitting subtitle, if not title, of his work would be *War and Intrigue in the Reign of Justinian*. What we find, for the most part, in Mr. Baker's book is the substance of Procopius's Histories, with the arrangement judiciously altered—a clear and lively account of the Persian, African, and Italian campaigns of Belisarius and Narses, the Nika revolt of 532, the appalling pestilence of 542, and much of the intricate plotting and scheming within and about the imperial court. The leading characters are two dominating pairs, Justinian and Theodora, Belisarius and Antonina, and there is little doubt that the wife was in each combination the more dominant partner. It might fairly be said that Belisarius is as prominent in Mr. Baker's pages as Justinian. Secondary rôles are played by Chosroes the Persian, Gelimer the Vandal, Vitiges and Totila, Goths, and John the (villainous) Cappadocian, Narses the faithful, and even Procopius himself.

It is, in the nature of the case, inevitable that the material of Procopius should bulk large in a work on Justinian. After all, one must rely on the means at one's disposal, and Procopius is the unmatched primary source for much of this period; he is, further, not a despicable authority, if he is wisely employed. This Mr. Baker clearly recognizes (Preface, vi-xii). In passing it should be said that he displays excellent restraint and discrimination in his use of this sometimes enigmatic witness. He is in good company (e. g. Bury's) in acknowledging the *Secret Histories* (*Anecdota*) as Procopius's own and in refusing to bar them utterly as historical evidence. He regards them as a composite of infamous and largely unreliable scandal and of material supplementary to the Histories. It is to his credit that he will not cater to the modern craving for gutter gossip by retailing the lurid *chronique scandaleuse* of Theodora's prenuptial career. He dismisses the subject curtly with the not unreasonable suggestion that such slanders may have emanated from the embittered John the Cappadocian (24-25, 210). On the other hand, again along with Bury, he accepts (135-138) the statement of the *Secret Histories* (16) that it was Theodora who secretly persuaded

Theodahad the Goth to have his queen Amalasuntha strangled to death; by this acceptance a troublesome passage in the Histories is quickly elucidated.

But, if the writings of Procopius must determine to a large extent what an author shall say about Justinian and his times, they need not and should not be the criterion of what shall be omitted, if, that is, the completed portrait is to be well-rounded. Mr. Baker knows as well as anyone that Justinian and Roman law are almost synonymous terms (see v-vi), and he can say (102) that "it has been given to very few men to produce two works so mighty as the Church of St. Sophia and the Roman Civil Law..." There is little justification, therefore, for the scant allotment of less than three pages (100-102) to this supreme achievement of Justinian's reign, even though it be true, as it probably is, that Justinian himself had small legal knowledge. In his brief mention of the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* Mr. Baker merely names, without explanation, the *Digest*, *Institutes*, and the revised *Code*, and omits reference altogether to the *Novels*. The case is almost the same with the burning religious issues and controversies of Justinian's time and the Emperor's own active participation in them. There are, to be sure, passing references to these matters, for they were so intertwined with contemporary politics that they can hardly be discarded altogether. Yet the treatment of them is far from adequate and the emphasis on them is less than it should be to bring home to the reader the very important place which they occupied in the thoughts and the labors of Justinian himself, about whom Gibbon can say that "to promote the temporal and spiritual interest of the church was the serious business of his life; and the duty of father of his country was often sacrificed to that of defender of the faith..."². It almost looks as if Mr. Baker had adopted the reticence of Procopius himself, who writes in his Histories (5.3.6³), 'I am acquainted with these controversial questions, but I will not go into them. For I consider it a sort of insane folly to investigate the nature of God. Man

²The *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter 47 (Volume 4, page 142 of the edition, with notes, by the Rev. H. H. Milman [The John C. Winston Company, Philadelphia, undated]).

³Quoted by J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, 2.427 (London, Macmillan, 1923).

cannot accurately apprehend the constitution of man, how much less that of the Deity'. Of the closing of the Athenian schools of philosophy in 529 as a result of Justinian's edicts I can find no mention in this book. Yet this momentous departure should be of the utmost significance for one who aims to make of Justinian a terminal figure between the Roman world and the nationalized Europe that grew out of it.

These, I think, must be regarded as serious defects in Mr. Baker's book. There are some others, less serious, that may pass as mere infelicities. In his fluent and sprightly style of writing our author is generally successful in preserving a dignified balance between the austere prosaic and the colloquial. It seems unfortunate, therefore, that he should drop the level of his discourse, even occasionally, to the point of terming Belisarius's Eastern-Romans "the little Dago army..." (148: compare 146), despite his apology on page 150, or of speaking of a conspiracy against Justinian as an attempt "to bump the old man off..." (293). These are jarring notes. At the other end of the scale, one grows impatient at meeting such pedantic, and quixotic, oddities as Eadwaeccer (for Odoacer), Geilamir (Gelimer), Khosru (Chosroes), Theuderic, Theudebert, and Hadriatic. By necessity Mr. Baker's pages teem with a multitude of strange names. It is no service to his readers to add to their difficulties by departing so cavalierly from the long-familiar spellings of Gibbon, Hodgkin, and Bury. Why must the Po be always the Padus, whereas the Tiber is always the Tiber, Rome Rome, and Constantinople Constantinople? Incidentally, the Index (337-340) contains much less than a complete listing of all the proper names that occur in the text.

Within its limits Mr. Baker's book is interesting and serviceable, and it is certainly not without value as a simplified and rational interpretation of Procopius. But it hardly presents a complete Justinian. Those who have read others of the same author's works may well have the feeling, after closing this volume, that he has done better things.

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